

Amendments to the Claims:

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Original) A method for providing a hole into a valve component having an internal cavity, said method comprising the steps of filling and sealing a fluid within said cavity; and laser drilling the hole through the component into the internal cavity, wherein the valve component is a valve stem.
2. (Original Canceled) ~~A method for providing a hole according to claim 1, wherein the valve component is a valve stem.~~
3. (Original) A method of manufacturing a valve stem, said method comprising the steps of :
 - a) providing a valve stem work-piece having a passageway with an outlet;
 - b) filling the passageway with a fluid;
 - c) sealing the outlet;
 - d) laser drilling a side port through the work-piece into the passageway;
 - e) unsealing the outlet.
4. (Original) A method of manufacturing a valve stem according to claim 3, wherein the valve stem is plastic and the valve stem work-piece is provided by molding, in particular by injection thermoplastic molding.
5. (Currently amended) A method of manufacturing a valve stem according to claim 3, wherein the valve stem is plastic and the step of providing a valve stem work-piece includes the steps:
 - i) providing a valve stem blank having one or more exterior contours of the valve stem by thermoplastic injection molding, ~~in particular by injection thermoplastic molding~~; and
 - ii) forming the passageway and outlet by drilling.

6. (Original) A method of manufacturing a valve stem according to claim 3, wherein the valve stem is metal and the valve stem work-piece is provided by machining and/or cold forging.
7. (Original) A method of manufacturing a valve stem according to claim 3, wherein the valve stem is metal and the step of providing the valve stem work-piece includes the steps:
 - i) providing a valve stem blank having one or more exterior contours of the valve stem by machining and/or cold forging;
 - ii) forming the passageway and outlet by drilling.
8. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a valve stem according to claim 5, wherein the passageway and outlet are formed by laser drilling.
9. (Original) A method of manufacturing a valve stem according to claim 3, wherein the valve stem is metal and the valve stem work-piece is provided by deep drawing.
10. (Original) A method of manufacturing a valve stem according to claim 9, wherein the method further comprises the steps
 - f) inserting into the passageway a plug, such that a portion of the interior of the passageway between the closed end of the valve stem and the side port is sealed off; and
 - g) curling outlet end of the stem inwardly,
wherein the step (f) of inserting the plug is performed either before step b) or after step e) and wherein the step (g) of curling the outlet end is performed either before step b) or after step e), but after inserting the plug.
- 11.-14. (Withdrawn)